Decline in leather garment exports

891. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a decline in leather garment exports;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to increase the leather garment exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. In the last few years there is a declining trend in leather garments exports. The reasons for the decline in exports are *inter-alia* the increasing popularity of garments of substitute materials, changing climatic conditions in destination markets, supplies at lower rate by other countries etc.

(c) Government is taking steps to implement the Indian Leather Development Programme (ILDP), with an outlay of Rs. 400 crore, *inter-alia* for technology upgradation, modernization and expansion of the leather industry as well as for infrastructure development and capacity building. Government is also supporting Council for Leather Exports (CLE) and individual exporters for exports of leather products through the Market Development Assistance and the Market Access Initiative Schemes.

Indo-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

892. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is on the fast track;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Korea also proposes to link a CEPA with India;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) how far these agreements would help to further boost trade between India and these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) In the context of the ongoing work of the India-Japan Joint Study Group, the two sides have agreed to examine the possibility of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

(c) and (d) Yes, sir. The India-Korea Joint Study Group has recommended a Korea-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) convering, among other things, trade in goods, trade in services, measured for trade facilitation, the promotion, facilitation and liberalization of investment flows, measures for promoting bilateral economic cooperation in identified sectors, and other areas. A Joint Task Force has been constituted to work on the task of developing a CEPA between the two countries.

(e) It is the endeavour of the Government to build long-term, sustainable and enduring economic relations with other countries. These agreements would help to further boost economic ties, trade and investment between India and these countries.

Comprehensive Economic Cooperation with Singapore

893. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has entered into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with Singapore recently;

(b) if so, whether it will not lead to flood of imports from the third world countries since Singapore has got enough safeguards in the agreement; and

(c) if so, how the Ministry is thinking of meeting this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Under the Rules of Origin prescribed in this Agreement, goods manufactured in third countries are not eligible for imports into India through Singapore at preferential duties.